

# Conversion Therapy Submission

mcb 20

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## **Conversion Therapy is defined and seen differently by affected groups:**

1. People who may come under pressure from privileged leaders within their social groups to undertake "conversion therapy".
2. Church "leaders" who pressure and force vulnerable people within their community, under threat of social ostracism and eternal residence in fires not actually listed in the Bible.

## **These parties have very different personal stakes in Conversion Therapy**

People subjected to Conversion Therapy may suffer loss of self-value, depersonalisation and possibly may suicide. This has been observed in NZ and all around the world.

1. People who have undergone or are at risk of being pressured to undergo conversion therapy, if they understand the realities about likely outcomes, are strongly against conversion therapy.

Those who do not have that knowledge, often agree to undergo conversion therapy, due to people they respect and trust advising that it is for their "good". They are often young, socially disadvantaged in some way and are particularly vulnerable to this poorly formed, ill informed and ethically conflicted "advice".

2. The church leaders who give this conflicted "advice" are guided by their religious dreams and have no knowledge of the range of outcomes that are likely to occur. Even when told, they refuse to listen. Even when told again, they still refuse to listen.

These church "leaders" are in a conflict of interest. They are using fear to manipulate and control their flocks, for church and personal financial gain. They proceed according to their own financial gain, irrespective of the welfare of all of the people in their congregation. They appear to have no personal involvement, no family who might be harmed or friends. However, many such leaders have been exposed as closet homosexuals, who use church funds to purchase the services of "rent boys". In these cases, they are projecting their personal problems onto other people and harming people they stigmatise (including themselves). See Appendix Anti-Gay Preachers Who Ended Up Being Gay.

A parallel can be drawn, to churches putting the interests of their leaders over protecting young or vulnerable members from sexual abuse by church leaders. All of this in an environment where they publicly positioned themselves as moral leaders, who should be trusted in many aspects of life.

When accusations of damaging children or other vulnerable people have arisen, these churches have almost always fought to protect their leaders and in doing so have compounded the damages to the people they have criminally offended against. Even leaders not involved in the original criminal acts, have often been involved in covering them up. This has been despite obligations to report these crimes to the police for investigation and if appropriate, for prosecution.

A counter case to religious people being faced with stigma's application onto a family member, is the Momma Bear movement in USA. Mormon mothers who start to realise that their child is gay, may dissociate themselves from the mormon church, in part or in total, to protect their child from the destructive effects of stigma.

## The Altruistic Form of The Golden Rule

It seems that an indicator of safe churches, versus those likely to do harm using Conversion Therapy, is their attitude toward judging of other people outside of an appropriate need to do so. This is one aspect of their use of fear to manipulate their congregation. This flows on from whether they follow the altruistic form of the Golden Rule. The Golden Rule predates christian religions by at least a millenium. All through this time till today, new churches have been marked by the recommendation of the altruistic form of the Golden Rule. Usually within a century the church leaders have drifted back to the "do unto others as you would have them do unto you", in the narrowest sense, where the different culture, values and beliefs of the recipient are not respected.

Churches which have maintained the altruistic form of the Golden Rule have been Jewish outside of Israel, Islam in the main, Bahai, Quakers and Unitarians. None of these churches is known for sexual abuse of members.

There are difficult to manage issues when a practitioner serves their own personal values, where this conflicts with the patient's values. This issue arises in the medical profession when dealing with a woman's decision to abort her foetus. These challenges have been accepted and overcome. Thirty years later, almost no complaints are made in this space.

## Conversion Therapy Surgeries to Intersex Children

There are still complaints that medical practitioners do "normalising" surgeries onto intersex babies, without informed consent by either the baby or the parents. This issue is still current and work is needed to prevent such "conversion therapies" being suffered. In this case, the body is being panel-beated to apparently match the as yet unknown gender of the baby. When doctors guess the gender identity of the baby, from the visible genitalia, a moderate fraction of the time they get it completely wrong.

In this situation they have given an intersex child the affliction of being transgender as well. This is conversion therapy in the opposite sense to conversion therapy as attempted interference with the mind. Given that transgender people are present in relatively small numbers, this "conversion therapy" to intersex children is quite possibly a bigger degree of problem than "conversion therapy" counselling to transgender children. Although intersex advocates have complained about these practices for some 3 decades, very little has been done by the medical profession to stop these unethical and problem causing practices.

The following is the first medical research paper (2011) to respond constructively to a quarter of a century of complaints from intersex people, about performing "normalising" surgeries on intersex babies.

Gender monitoring and gender reassignment of children and adolescents with a somatic disorder of sex development 2011

Although I am transgender, I consider transgender to be a small corner of the umbrella group intersex. Doctors consider intersex as intersex of only the body. This is an artificial and dangerously reductive approach. Transgender is intersex of the mind and that attitude can contribute greatly to constructively approaching the transgender condition. There is a very variable overlap between intersex and transgender conditions. Professor Milton Diamond of Hawaii first suggested this in the mid 1950s. He was the far sighted researcher who investigated and exposed Professor John Money's academic dishonesty. By doing this, he saved many tens of thousands of cisgender children from unnecessary and extremely harmful sex-change surgeries.

## Misuse of Fear as a Marketing Tool

See Appendix Anti-Gay Preachers Who Ended Up Being Gay   Hypocrisy's great hall of fame

These preachers who created a culture of fear, were so often members of the group that they espoused to hate, despise, stigmatise. Although commonly judged as hypocrites, these people projected their own weakness onto others, Where there was actually no need to judge, they were quick to judge others and stigmatise.

See Appendix When your Mormon child comes out... as trans   Affirmation and Mama Dragons

This article shows a mother who when conflicted by church rigid cannon, decided to put her child's welfare before rigid observance of mormon church cannon. Many mothers have faced that choice and it appears that a significant minority have put their children's safety first. I have used a published USA article, but doubtless many NZ parents face similar choices and make similar decisions. Although the mormon church initially refused to bend to parishioner's concerns, there has been some softening of how cannon is applied. As a result dangers for

children have reduced somewhat. But it cannot be said that children's interests are appropriately protected in these situations. The same is presently true in NZ.

The article above is about general stigma, not specifically about Conversion Therapy. In general, the issues are very similar.

When leaders fail to protect vulnerable members of their congregation, to an extent of say more than a handful of suicides, then it amounts in my opinion, to murder most foul.

USA kills overseas citizens casually and yet it is vengeful about any deaths of its own citizens. This behaviour and attitude is a clear breach of the altruistic form of the Golden Rule. As a result, many citizens of other countries run a counter attitude. The combination of these attitudes feeds ongoing wars, around the world.

As a society, we are faced with a choice between protecting already privileged people, or to change direction and protect vulnerable people, who are presently unnecessarily subject to severe harms?

The harms being suffered are not directly linkable by hard evidence in every case. But over time, observers have seen repeating patterns that indicated the causative action. Even so, our society has been very slow to protect vulnerable members, especially if at a cost to privileged members.

## **I suggest that the important issues about protecting vulnerable people are**

As far as practical, people should carry the appropriate responsibility for the wider consequences for their actions. This provides constructive incentives to respectful, safe and constructive behaviour, towards all other people that they impact on.

Issues of evidence and degree of proof have shielded perpetrators from carrying damages and from personal punishment, such as jail. These issues have more impact on the social outcomes, than the details of how a crime of conversion therapy is defined.

Obligations to obtain informed consent have proven challenging to medical practitioners and will be more challenging to prejudiced church leaders. I recommend that for conversion therapy, all informed consents be registered with the Government, before any conversion therapy is practiced. Any breach of that requirement, to bring down mandatory jail sentences, for the perpetrators. This requirement will encourage automatic recording of treatment as evidence, which helps with resolution any later disputes.

The public must be clearly informed about the law and how it will be applied. At present, church leaders feel very safe from any threat of paying damages or personal punishments, such as time in jail. Any improvements to

legislation must be communicated clearly and bluntly enough that these church "leaders" will realise that they are very likely to be held to account for their behaviour, in public and in private. On occasions these leaders have stated that they see church canon law as being a higher duty than following the laws of the country that they are in. I demand that such people are fully held to account for their actions and the damages that they cause, despite their privileged positions.

Generally NZ provides some protection for the interests of the marginalised members of our society.

Although heterosexuals have been protected by the Human Rights Act for decades, physically or mentally disabled people, homosexuals, bisexuals have only recently been listed in the Human Rights Act. Even that listing has not yet led to effective protection of their right to be able to participate and be safe within our society. They still receive poor access to medical services.

Intersex and Transgender people still don't have a listing in the Human Rights Act and receive grudging and extremely restricted access to medical treatments. This cannot be fought in the courts, due to the lack of listing in the Human Rights Act.

In this sense, it does seem to be the cart leading the horse, to pass Conversion Therapy legislation, in the absence of proper human rights protection for transgender people. But that is a political poisonous chalice due to right wing christian manipulation of our political system, far beyond their numbers in our society. In this situation, it is still worth proceeding with Conversion Therapy legislation. (In the same way, improved protection of disabled people should be given priority too.)

In any case, I strenuously support effective legislation banning Conversion Therapy on people who are not able to give informed consent, in all areas of NZ life.

This should not be necessary, if our courts were willing and able to apply existing legislation and Law of Torts. But the last 50 years experience with child and vulnerable person protection has shown that these existing systems too often fail to work. As a result, clear and actually enforced legislation is required, to appropriately balance the interests of privileged people against vulnerable members of our society. Our courts traditionally serve the Crown, to the point of failing to protect vulnerable citizens. Our Constitution seriously fails in these respects.

## Personal Disclosure of Interest

I am a transwoman, aged 64 years.

I accepted that I was a transperson at age 61, when I realised that my risk taking behaviours were getting out of hand and society was less prejudiced, so that I thought I could handle the prejudices around getting appropriate treatment.

I have lived in stealth, since before I can remember.

I was unable to obtain treatment through ADHB and ended up having to pay for all of my treatment privately. I was in the fortunate position that I could afford this and I received some help from my parents also. It has used up most of my retirement savings, Few transgender people can afford this, due to poor job prospects.

Although I have never had church organised "conversion therapy", I was struck when listening to the stories of survivors of non-altruistic church organised conversion therapy, that my life included similar damage.

After 3 years of counselling, I realised in that by trying to live in stealth, I had caused myself the same types of harm. I had internalised the transphobia. This illustrates the impacts that communicating hatred enables and encourages other people to "independently" injure, be prejudiced against, or even murder LGBTIQ people. This remote injury is suffered without the source of the hatred presently having to bear any responsibility for the foreseeable consequences of their actions.

Although transgender people have become a bit more visible to wider society, the vast majority flow through society unseen by the public. Why would you show your face, when it can make so much difficulty/

If that is true to transgender, it is more true for intersex people. Although present in the population to about 3 times the extent of transgender, they are less visible and often unable to advocate for themselves.

For that reason, I have strenuously mentioned the extreme hazards to intersex babies, of medical practitioners unethically performing "normalising" surgeries. I want to speak for those with even less voice. In that respect I support Rogena Stirling's submission.



## Appendix Jesus said don't judge others Mr Folau

By **Andrew Whiteside**

<https://www.andrewwhiteside.com/didnt-jesus-tell-you-not-to-judge-others-mr-folau/>



In the bible, Jesus preached about love and compassion and not about judging one's fellow man. That message seems to have fallen on deaf ears where committed Christian and rugby player Israel Folau is concerned. According to him, unless we repent our sin of homosexuality, we queers are going to hell.

Responding to the furore this has created, Folau has said

*"People's lives are not for me to judge" and "I know a lot of people will find that difficult to understand, but I believe the Bible is the truth and sometimes the truth can be difficult to hear."*

Well let's just demolish those two pieces of crap:

The problem with *"people's lives are not for me to judge"* is that that is exactly what he is doing. Not judging someone means keeping your mouth shut, and not saying a group of people are going to hell.

*"I know a lot of people will find that difficult to understand, but I believe the Bible is the truth and sometimes the truth can be difficult to hear."*

Ummm... *'the truth'* you say? Have you ever read the bible Mr Folau? If he had, he would have seen it is FULL of contradictions and some pretty nasty things we modern folk are horrified by.

For a little light reading [this site gives a comprehensive breakdown of the contradictions](#).

But in a nutshell, the bible says you can keep slaves, beat your wife, have more than one wife, and that you can smite people for all sorts of minor infractions. The famous [letter to Dr Laura outlines this so well](#).

### **So why is he doing this?**

A good question, and open to all sorts of speculation. Folau has claimed it's because he wants to 'save' people, but I'm not buying that arrogant presumption, and besides, you don't save people by threatening them.

I think the answer lies in one of two reasons. Firstly, I think he is trying to make a name for himself and that he considers himself to be one of the 'chosen ones.' You know, the ones who have a special relationship with God and who will get into heaven coz they are just SO good.

The problem with that is Mr Folau is a self-confessed sinner . He's even posted a passive aggressive picture of himself with those very words. But I don't believe he truly thinks he's a sinner, because if he did, he wouldn't try to create a self-aggrandising hierarchy of sin.

The second possibility is that he's hiding something about himself. It could be that he's secretly gay or bisexual, or it could be something else, something he just can't face. By condemning homosexuality he might think he can deflect any self-shame onto others.

The tricky thing is, that technique has been used, unsuccessfully, by a lot of Christian people in the past and you can [watch a video of that on my website](#).

### **What is wrong with his beliefs?**

I'm not going to go into an argument about whether or not God exists, but Folau has some pretty twisted views on the bible. On the one hand he claims it is the literal truth, but conveniently ignores some pretty big parts of it that apply to him. As with most anti-gay Christians, he's cherry picked bits to suit his views.

For example, Leviticus is usually used as a battering ram against gays, but it also has this to say:

Leviticus 19:28:

*"You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord."*

Not sure if you've noticed, but Mr Folau has a very large tribal tattoo on his right shoulder and his surname on his left breast.

Leviticus 19:27:

*"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard."*

Once again an inconsistency – Mr Folau trims his hair, and he doesn't even have a beard – shock horror!

And another one involves his wife Maria Folau (nee Tutaia), since sadly, she's waded in to this and supported him.

Deuteronomy 25:11-12:

*"When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her."*

Ok, I'm taking liberties here, but that's exactly the point. Christians such as Folau take huge liberties with the scriptures and their beliefs.

### **What can he do instead?**

Simply stop this "I'm not judging but the bible tells me I should condemn you" crap, grow some balls and admit truthfully that he has a personal issue with homosexuality and he can't really explain why. I'd admire him a lot more for that honesty.

He can also follow the teachings of Jesus and not judge us. Instead he could work on his own sins and stop projecting them on to us.

He can also speak out about more important issues, such as racism, or poverty, or global warming.

If he really believes God and Jesus can save mankind, then why not welcome people into his faith and share what he believes is the essence of God's grace, love and compassion

## Appendix When your Mormon child comes out... as trans Affirmation and Mama Dragons

### [Opinion](#)

<https://religionnews.com/2018/08/30/when-your-mormon-child-comes-out-as-trans/>

*Two Mormon mothers discuss the unique struggles of raising transgender kids, especially when the LDS Church is not supportive or dismisses gender dysphoria as something that will be healed in the afterlife.*

Transgender flag.

August 30, 2018

By

[Jana Riess](#)

A guest post by Mette Harrison

As I've become more active in [Affirmation](#) and [Mama Dragons](#), I've been taught by dear friends who are transgender about this unique part of the rainbow spectrum, the "T" in "LGBTQ+." I also had the gift of having my "nephew" (his parents are aunt/uncle to my children, though not by blood) come out as trans and walking alongside him in transition. Grayson Moore is my nephew, and Neca is one of my dearest and oldest friends. Through her and my own activism, I've become connected to wonderful mothers like Karin Berg who have helped shepherd their own children through their own transitions, which often take several steps.



Neca and Grayson.

Grayson was born to a Mormon family in Utah, assigned female at birth. As he grew up he was attracted to women, so he labeled himself as “lesbian,” but then gender dysphoria became apparent. When he learned about the possibility of being trans, he realized that many of his feelings were likely because he was a transgender young man. He told our family at the age of 16, when he began to transition, that he had the “soul” of a man in a woman’s body.

Neca suggested that this was very much in line with the Mormon “[Proclamation on the Family](#),” which says that gender is innate and unchangeable, which is how she feels that Grayson’s gender is. He did not “choose” to be transgender, but rather was made this way by God. Grayson was an active Mormon for many years, though he’s on “sabbatical” at the moment. Neca remains active in the Church.

Neca says that she knew that Grayson (not his birth name, which can be triggering for some transgender people) was not a typical little girl, but she and her husband weren’t gender typical themselves, so that never bothered them. They expected a nerdy child who liked building toys and playing computer games, and Grayson fit into that mold very well. But at puberty, things started to change and Grayson was very unhappy and confused about the accompanying body changes.



Many parents of children who are on the rainbow spectrum experience multiple transitions. Some come out first as bisexual, then as gay. Some come out as gay first, then as trans. Some settle on “queer” as an identity and others as “non-binary,” meaning they don’t feel like either gender binary is for them. They switch between genders or are androgynous or something individual that feels right for them.

For other parents, Mormon or not, who have a trans child, Neca suggests the Facebook group [“Parents of Transgender Children”](#) for more information, but it’s a closed group. There’s also a [Mama Dragons](#) subgroup (a group of women who advocate for their kids who are LGBTQ+) for mothers with trans kids. She suggests asking to be added because there has to be privacy for parents to talk about things before their child comes out fully. If a child is pre-pubescent, Neca suggests that puberty blockers might be possible, to help delay puberty changes that can be so distressing. But she also says that keeping open conversation between parents and child is the most important thing.

For Neca, there was never a grieving period after Grayson came out as trans, though she says it is very common. Many parents mourn the loss of the future they imagined they would have with their child, a future that had specific rites of passage that mark one gender or another, like Scouting in the Mormon church or bride’s room activities and childbirth for women. Neca says, “Grayson is right here, the same person he has always been.” But she herself is still angry that society is so unsupportive of transgender people, especially many within the Mormon church.

When Grayson first came out as trans, his ward was supportive, but the handbook says that undergoing “elective transsexual operation” (what this means is undefined, and could refer to hysterectomy, breast removal, or other surgery doctors may consider necessary) “may be cause for formal church discipline.” Grayson was asked not to attend priesthood meetings. But later, his YSA wards were more accepting and welcomed him where he felt comfortable. For Neca, some particularly joyful moments have been Grayson’s singing in the “One Voice Community Choir” that includes many members of the Mormon church.



Karin and Skye.

Karin Bergtold me about her transgender daughter Skye's transition and how difficult it was within a Mormon context that taught that her daughter would be "healed" in the next life and made to accept that she "really" is male. She talks about Syke's father's belief that being transgender was wrong, and that the whole family needed to fast and pray to change Skye. But no matter the prayers, Skye was still transgender, and Mormon theology didn't seem to have a way to deal with what happens when God doesn't answer a prayer like this.

Karin is concerned with the number of suicides she is seeing among transgender Mormons, especially the youth. They are told to be faithful and endure, that they will be "healed in the next life" and will "no longer have to suffer with this affliction." That doesn't help in the here and now, though. Most of the Mormons around Karin and Skye continued to believe they should be praying more to change the feelings of gender dysphoria instead of moving toward transition to the proper gender, as medical professionals now recommend. Even worse, Karin felt that many other Mormons gave the impression that they believed Skye's transgenderism was infectious and could "rub off" on their own children, so they withdrew former friendships and made Skye feel very alone. This is one of the reasons Karin has officially resigned and Skye has stopped attending the Mormon church.

When I asked Karin if she had had a feeling all along that her child was different, she said that she thought the child she had named “Michael” was gay. When Karin was growing up, someone she loved deeply had to hide the fact that he was gay, and she was determined her children wouldn’t have to do that. She saw differences in “Michael,” but tried to give lessons on how to be more “male.” She feels guilty now that her child had to hide for eighteen years. Many parents have this sense of guilt at least initially, but it slowly resolves over time as they have more experiences with their child’s new identity.

Karin writes, “She used to fantasize that she was a girl, as a child as young as four or five. She determined that all little boys did this.” And “She spent most of her time alone, because she didn’t fit in with boys, and the girls didn’t want her either.”

Skye was taught at church that being transgender was a sin, “Oh my god, the battle she fought within herself. Skye believed who she really was couldn’t be real. That she had to be making it all up. . . The shame was overwhelming.”

To other parents, Karin gives the advice to “step back from themselves and all their fears, and remember this isn’t about them. No matter how much it hurts.” Though parents have expectations for every child, sometimes these expectations have to be given up. The gift we can give to every child is that of seeing them clearly, and accepting them as they are. They need to determine their own lives. Karin says, “We can be warriors for them, or roadblocks.” She chose the former. She doesn’t believe there is much to be done in the Mormon church, however, and feels she has to move beyond that.



## Appendix AntiGay Preachers Who Ended Up Being Gay

Hypocrisy's great hall of fame



Dan Foster

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Aug 27 · 11 min read

<https://medium.com/backyard-theology/anti-gay-preachers-who-ended-up-being-gay-2fd4697ef112>



Image by By [Krakenimages.com](https://www.krakenimages.com) on [Shutterstock](https://www.shutterstock.com)

The single most homophobic person I ever met was the pastor at my old church. Back in 2017, when my country was looking to legalize same-sex unions, all citizens were called upon to vote in a compulsory plebiscite — either for or against changing the legal definition of marriage to include the LGBTQ community.

In the lead-up to this vote, my old pastor went on a one-person political stampede warning anyone who would listen of the apparent dangers of allowing two people of the same gender who happen to love each other to join together in (un)holy matrimony.

He would email anti-gay propaganda to everyone in the church and proclaim from the pulpit: *"This is a slippery slope,"* insinuating that before long, the radical left would be pushing to legalize polygamy, polyamory, marriage between adults and children, adults and animals, adults and trees. *"There is no end to the evil that will befall us if we don't take a stand!"* It was really quite remarkable how long he drew his bow. And by delivering a steady diet of fear, he implored his faithful followers, *"Stay on God's side!"*

Many of them did — at least in their own opinions.

Of course, the vote fell in favor of same-sex marriage, and the rest is history. Life went on. God didn't rain down fire from Heaven. And nothing much changed in our society, save for the fact we all became much more accepting of difference. No one is marrying children, animals, or trees.

What struck me about this old pastor was just how real his fear was and how loud he was with his objections to same-sex marriage. I have this image in my mind's eye of him slumped in his leather-bound swivel chair — solemn, subdued, head bowed — when the results of the vote were announced. You could have been mistaken for thinking his wife had been diagnosed with inoperable cancer by the way he reacted.

He grieved.

Sadly, way too many men in the church have chosen this hill to die on. Despite Jesus's silence on the matter, they feel that they must raise their voice against the LGBTQ community. But, the most troubling scenario of

all, one that is surprisingly more prevalent than you might think, is when one of these anti-gay warriors ends up themselves being outed.

## When anti-gay warriors are busted

My exploration of this theme started when I read an [excellent article](#) by my dear friend

James Finn

about a catholic priest named Jeffrey Burrill. Burrill was a powerful anti-LGBTQ voice who served as general secretary of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. This group [actively lobbied](#) Congress to axe a proposed national suicide hotline because it directed help to suicidal LGBTQ people.

According to [Finn](#), Burrill was the man who executed the Catholic church's homophobic policies, *"including promoting an [official Catholic organization called Courage](#) that claims homosexuality is a [result of mental illness](#) and that [encourages conversion therapy](#), a practice every major mental health association in the world acknowledges is intensely harmful."*

However, Burrill's anti-LGTBQ charade all fell apart when it was discovered that he had been using Grindr — a gay sex app — practically every day for years. Moreover, Burrill was a regular visitor to gay bars and would frequent *The Entourage* in Las Vegas — an upscale bathhouse where wealthy gay men meet for casual sex.

That's right.

Jeffrey Burrill, the highest-ranking Catholic priest in the United States who is not a bishop, had been having sex with men for years — regularly, on purpose — while simultaneously undermining the rites of the LGBTIQ community and programs that support them.



Photo by [Emily Webster](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Introducing Haggard's Law

[Ted Haggard](#) was an American evangelical pastor who served as President of the [National Association of Evangelicals](#). Haggard was a staunch defender of traditional marriage. In 2006, Haggard and his church supported [Colorado Amendment 43](#) to the Colorado Constitution: *"Only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state."* Haggard once [said](#), *"We don't have to debate about what we should think about homosexual activity. It's written in the Bible."*

So, you can imagine how surprised everybody was when a male prostitute and masseur named Mike Jones alleged that Haggard had paid him for sex for three years. After initially denying the allegations, Haggard would later admit to using drugs and participating in sexual activity with both Jones and another man who attended his church.

The Haggard scandal led satirists to develop what became known as "Haggard's Law." The [Urban Dictionary](#) defines it thus: *"The likelihood*

*of a person harboring secret desires to engage in sexual and/or romantic activities with members of the same sex is directly proportional to the frequency and volume of said person's vocalized objections to homosexuality."*

Or, to put it another way: The louder and more frequent one's objections to homosexuality are, the more likely one is to be a homosexual.

Now, it should be noted straight up that there is absolutely no scientific evidence to support Haggard's Law. Well... all except for this one particular study.

## Is homophobia linked to homosexual arousal?

So, this is merely an interesting sidetrack.

In 1996, a group of willing scientists decided to ask: Is homophobia linked to suppressed homosexual desire? Sixty-four men who self-reported as heterosexual were selected for a [study](#) to find out the answer. Firstly, all the men completed a survey about their attitudes towards homosexuality and were thus split into two groups: "homophobic" and "non-homophobic."

Then, men were exposed to sexually explicit erotic stimuli consisting of heterosexual, male homosexual, and female homosexual videotapes, and changes in penile circumference were monitored.

The results?

Both groups exhibited increases in penile circumference to the heterosexual and female homosexual videos. But only the homophobic men showed an increase in penile erection to male homosexual stimuli. In other words, only the homophobes got a stiffy.

However, before you triumphantly shout, “*Aha! I knew it!*” the results of the study proved inconclusive. Why? Because what was measured as arousal may have been the result of anxiety. I don’t understand how having your penis measured by scientists while you watch pornographic material could possibly make you anxious??!

Anyway, the authors of the [study](#) were quick to point out: “*It is possible that viewing homosexual stimuli causes negative emotions such as anxiety in homophobic men but not in non-homophobic men. Because anxiety has been shown to enhance arousal and erection, this theory would predict increases in erection in homophobic men.*”

It still makes interesting food for thought, don't you think?



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## The Hall of Shame

So, should Haggard's Law be taken merely as an ironic term, or is there some truth behind it? Well, when you read through the Hall of Fame — or perhaps I should call it the Hall of Shame — of hardcore anti-LGBTQ Christians who ended up being exposed as homosexuals themselves, it doesn't bode well for the former. Here's the list I found:

Bob Allen

[Bob Allen](#) was an anti-gay politician from Florida who sponsored a failed bill to outlaw homosexual acts. Later he was convicted of solicitation after offering twenty bucks to perform oral sex on a male undercover police officer.



## Alan Chambers

[Alan Chambers](#) was responsible for founding [Exodus International](#), the most prominent gay conversion therapy ministry in the world. You can find his full story in the Netflix Documentary “[Pray Away](#).” After realizing the damage that his organization was causing, he shut it down and apologized. He would later come out himself.

## Marc Goodwin

In 2007, [Marc Goodwin](#) was sent to prison for murdering a gay man in a homophobic attack. Then in 2015, he became one of the first two men to receive a gay marriage in a British prison. Go figure!

## Ernest Angleley

[Ernest Angleley](#) was an internationally known televangelist who boldly declared homosexuality was a sin before later being sued for sexual abuse by a former male pastor and caught on tape admitting to the homosexual encounter.

## Roy Ashburn

[Roy Ashburn](#) was a Californian anti-gay politician who voted against gay rights bills. However, he was [caught](#) driving under the influence with a man he had picked up at a gay bar. The arrest launched nationwide [speculation](#) that the veteran lawmaker was gay and, therefore, a hypocrite for voting against gay-rights bills. In response to those accusations, during an interview, Ashburn stated that he is gay and that he believed voting against gay rights was his responsibility to his constituents. Yeah right.

## Bob Bauman



Congressman [Bob Bauman](#) was a staunch conservative who supported bills that would allow for discrimination against the LGBTQ community. However, in 1980, while he was running for re-election, Bauman was charged for soliciting sex from a 16-year-old male prostitute. He subsequently failed in his bid for reelection.

## Eddie Long

[Eddie Long](#) was an American pastor who served at New Birth Missionary Baptist Church, a 25,000 member megachurch in Atlanta. Long was unashamedly anti-LGBTQ. In fact, A 2007 [article](#) in the Southern Poverty Law Center's magazine called him *“one of the most virulently homophobic black leaders in the religiously based anti-gay movement.”*

However, in 2010, four different men alleged that Long had used his pastoral influence to coerce them into sexual relationships with them. These complaints, however, were settled out of court. The terms of these settlements were undisclosed.

## Matthew Makela

[Pastor Matthew Makela](#), a married father of five, reportedly routinely argued gay people should suppress their same-sex desires — while he was simultaneously chatting up guys on Grindr.

## David Matheson

[David Matheson](#) was a Mormon known for his decades-long work in the field of conversion therapy and encouraging gay people to remain celibate to avoid “sinning.” However, after the gay rights group Truth Wins Out leaked private Facebook conversations where Matheson

admitted to divorcing his wife and looking for a relationship with another man, he was forced to come out.

### Barry Poyner

[Barry Poyner](#), an anti-gay church leader and university professor in Missouri, was charged with patronizing prostitution after allegedly trying to solicit an 18-year-old man on Grindr with offers of gift cards and gas money.

### George Rekers

[George Rekers](#) is a Southern Baptist minister who has written numerous books about the evils of homosexuality, including the aptly titled “[Growing Up Straight — What Families Should Know About Homosexuality](#).” Rekers has long been affiliated with James Dobson and the Family Research Council and appeared as an “expert” witness in [several court cases](#) espousing how homosexuals aren’t fit to raise children and so should be prohibited from adoption.

In [May of 2010](#), he was spotted returning to Miami International Airport with a young Hispanic gentleman employed through an escort agency. Rekers argued that his male escort had been hired simply “to carry his bags.” The escort, however, said Rekers had paid him to provide nude massages daily.

### Steve Wiles

[Steve Wiles](#) was a Republican candidate for the North Carolina state senate and a vocal opponent of same-sex marriage. However, he was later exposed as having worked at a gay bar when he was in his 20s and even having performed as a drag queen.

## Gaylard Williams

Okay. So, I'll admit I picked Gaylard Williams because there is a certain irony in his name.

Gaylord... sorry, [Gaylard Williams](#), a former pastor in Indiana, was arrested for battery after soliciting gay sex at a park. After he was arrested, police discovered a gay porn DVD in his vehicle.



Image by [Krakenimages.com](#) on [Shutterstock](#)

## The moral of the immoral story

It makes for troubling reading, doesn't it? What's even more disturbing is that this is just a tiny sample from the list of men I found who were once loud and proud anti-LGBTQ warriors, who were later caught in some homosexual act.

The problem is not that these men were harboring same-sex attraction. It's that they were openly condemning other people of the same with full knowledge of their own inner struggle. They had zero compassion and zero empathy for the LGBTQ community, but in so doing, they were actually condemning themselves as well. The hypocrisy is breathtaking.

So what is the moral of this rather immoral story? I actually think there is one, and it's a good one. While Haggard's Law is, by no means, a solid scientific theory in any sense of the word, and you most certainly ***shouldn't*** take it as gospel, I think it points to a half-truth that we ought to acknowledge.

And what is that half-truth? It's that human beings are masters at projecting. According to psychologist [Karen R. Koenig](#), projection refers to unconsciously observing unwanted emotions or traits that you don't like about yourself and criticizing them in someone else. Yes, we all have an awful habit of projecting onto others what we don't like about ourselves, don't we?

On the other hand, people who learn to accept themselves — and who are comfortable reflecting on the good, bad, and ugly within — tend not to project. *"They have no need, as they can tolerate recognizing or experiencing the negatives about themselves without judging themselves,"* Koenig adds. Not that same-sex attraction should be viewed as something negative — unless you happen to be brought up in the church, that is.

Here is where I become conflicted.

You might sit back and condemn these men for their hypocrisy, and fair enough. It is thoroughly despicable and deserves to be called as much. But, when we are done condemning these men who so condemned others, perhaps we could find a modicum of compassion for them. These men were brought up in a system where they were taught same-sex attraction was a horrible evil. When they observed it one day in themselves to their own horror, they were confronted with a terrible choice.

Either they could accept their sexuality and be rejected by their faith community, or they could suppress their sexuality and still cling to their sense of belonging but live a kind of tortured existence. To silence their inner doubts, they lashed out at others, doubling down on their own hatred, which was actually self-directed but expressed towards those others who most reminded them of themselves.

Perhaps they despised those who had accepted their sexuality as a gift and the freedom that came with it — all the while observing it from inside the cage that the system had created for them.

They are both villains and victims.

Needless to say, the sorry sagas of each of the men in hypocrisy's hall of fame would not have occurred had they grown up in a system that blessed them to be who they really are, rather than forcing them to pretend to be something they are not.

*For more articles on life, faith, and spirituality, [Sign-up](#) for my newsletter. Also, feel free to send questions and story ideas to [thebackyardchurch@gmail.com](mailto:thebackyardchurch@gmail.com)*



## Appendix Example of Incorrect Statements in the Family First Conversion Therapy Submission

### Appendix Murray Charles Bacon commentary on Submission by Family First NZ Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill

mcb Where there are paragraphs I have not commented on, it means that they are not misleading enough to be worth wasting the readers time, by complaining about them. I have only commented on paragraphs where the degree of misleading and dishonesty are dangerous enough to require comments to be made.

These subjects have seriously confused medicine's greatest thinkers for several centuries. Cultural assumptions made by even well meaning researchers have frequently derailed the quality of their research.. Given this history, it is no wonder that many people remain highly confused today.

I have put in a moderate amount of effort into society and into medical research, to form a constructive understanding of what options I had in my life. And to understand the countercurrents around me, that I would have to live through. Accordingly, although I sometimes pour scorn onto non-altruistic church leaders and Family First, I acknowledge that this is a very confusing subject.

However, if cultural assumptions are put aside, then it becomes clear that transgender people have more limited options of choice, than most people assume. I found this extremely hard to accept myself. When I had understood that I could not choose about being transgender and my only choice was whether to seek treatment, the decision was simple to conceptualise. It took only 2 minutes to make. I wanted the appropriate treatment for my condition. By doG, did I have to fight hard to get it in NZ!!!

It is hard to identify causation. Even some good quality medical research papers from many countries, as recent as 2007 contain statements like "women who want to be men". This is more safely worded as: a woman who identifies as a man, who can only gain body/mind congruity with a male body and as a result would prefer to have a male body. Or in the other case: a man who identifies as a woman, who can only gain body/mind congruity with a female body. These issues are further confused by the observation that only a small minority of transgender people experience severe enough gender dysphoria to consider genital surgery.

This thought experiment can help some people to appreciate the impacts of gender dysphoria. If a woman is asked would you allow a sex-change surgeon to practice surgery on you, for say \$5,000? And then keep doubling the dollar figure until they start to seriously consider the offer, most get to about 10 to \$20 million before there is any consideration given. Ditto for men. Yet they are surprised that a transperson would consider a cost \$20 to \$120,000 to sort out the same issue? Religious people have an internal barrier to being able to empathise in this manner. This gives them the confidence to publicly fight against publicly funded healthcare for transgender people. I haven't yet started to publicly fight against publicly funded healthcare access for "christians".

In several thousand years minds have proven unable to usefully and practically achieve a change in identification, despite what a few religiously deluded people tell us from their prayers. By comparison, the body is more amenable to panel-beating to reverse from natal sex. Although these surgeries are a little complex, it is still the only practical solution that has been found. Who knows what the future offers?

## WHAT IS 'CONVERSION THERAPY'? by Family First NZ

1. However, banning 'conversion therapy' has now expanded to mean stopping someone who experiences *unwanted* same-sex attraction or gender dysphoria from getting counselling or support of any sort that they may themselves desire.

mcb This statement is quite misleading, in that the bill does not stop anyone from receiving counselling, for which they can make informed consent.

2. This bill therefore turns parents into criminals, religious leaders & counsellors into 'human rights abusers', and will make it potentially a crime for faith-based schools to teach that a person is born male or female.

mcb This is only true when parents endanger the mental health or well-being of their children. It is socially desirable that The State should protect children from parents who endanger them. Family First are assuming, without evidence, that parents always take the best care of their children. Experience has shown that many children are seriously harmed, even driven to suicide, by the "love and care" given by their parents. It is essential that The State protect children from all sources of developmental harm, irrespective of the source of that harm.

While societies are scared to protect children from harm, children continue to suffer serious harm. It is notable how often State agencies have tried to protect children and ended up doing further harm to the children. It is essential that The State put in sufficient skilled resources to be able to be successful at protecting children from parents, churches, paedophiles and the like.

## CRIMINALISING PARENTS

8. Under the proposed law, parents could be criminalised and liable to up to five years imprisonment simply for affirming that their sons are boys and their daughters are girls. A ban could criminalise parents who wish to rightly protect their child from the physical, emotional and psychological harm caused by gender dysphoria.

mcb Comments below 2 above, apply here. Family First and their quoted medical experts may have medical qualifications in the general sense, often not current. But none of these people have any record of contact with transgender people or homosexual people and offering successful treatment. They quite a limited number of case studies, prepared and presented without professional peer review. These are of negligible deciding power, compared to feedback from people with lived experience, counsellors and medical practitioners who have experience of delivering successful mental and physical healthcare. I acknowledge that medical research is overflowed with low quality transgender research. This is because such research is very poorly funded. Doctors receive no useful or relevant training in LGBTIQ healthcare, at GP level. As a result, many doctors, perhaps even the majority, have ill informed attitudes towards transgender and homosexual people. Our healthcare suffers badly, as we rely on a small number of doctors who self-train in these areas.

I request that The Committee question any doctors who may give evidence to it, that they are experienced in giving successful transgender and homosexual healthcare, before accepting their advice as being useful and relevant.

9. The Ministry of Justice's own analysis of the proposed law admits this. It says

*“interactions within a family would also be captured if they meet the*



*definition of conversion practices. It would be a criminal offence for parents, or other members of a family, to attempt to change or suppress the sexual orientation, gender identity or expression of children within the family.”*

Crown Law advice to the government also refers to this chilling effect on expressions of opinion within families & whānau.

mcb This is desirable and will encourage happily ignorant people to start to learn about all of the groups that quite legally do exist within our society and how to interact with us in a healthy and respectful way. It will hurt some ignorant people to learn how their behaviours have negatively impacted onto other people. This will be a substantial challenge to their self-image and integrity. If they wish to speak publicly, with a public and loud voice, they should have to be accountable for the impacts of what they choose to say in the real world.

Accountability may be uncomfortable.

It saves lives. Lives that these comfortable murderers choose to not see and not acknowledge at the moment. Lives that these privileged people publicly scorn, for negligible advantage to themselves or anyone. Their breath is just wasted on them.

10. This means that a mother who encourages and helps her 12-year-old daughter to accept the body she was born with, rather than being placed on dangerous puberty blockers and wearing chest binders, could be committing a criminal offence. That's how dangerous this bill is. Can Dad even gently discourage his nine- year-old son from wearing a dress and using the girls' public toilets?

13. If a boy learns about 'gender fluidity' at school and says they're no longer a boy, a parent would have to affirm that.

mcb This is exactly what the law is intended to achieve. This two paragraphs above are extremely misleading in that "encourage" implies offering assistance, which does not have to be taken. But in this case, Family First are suggesting that a parent decide on their child's internal sense of gender identity !!!???? It also implies that the parent has the same understanding of the large power imbalance between parents and the child. Most parents do not fully understand that power imbalance.

The word "affirm" isn't satisfactorily defined for the sentence to be unambiguous. Family First are objecting that a child can assess their own gender identity, but a parent cannot make that assessment. In point of fact, nobody can assess another person's gender identity, but the person themselves. Neither can a doctor, more fool them if they try!!!

Parents often feel that they are under intense pressure by society, employers, friends, church etc. Parents are not operating in a power vacuum. Pressures on the parents often lead to them putting an unconscionable amount of pressure onto their children. This is not a situation where informed consent is readily achieved. It is essential that The State protect children from harm, by parents or church members.

Many churches have a long history of protecting church authorities sexual desires and entertainment, over the welfare interests of children. These attitudes will only change when The State exercises prosecutions of perpetrators who harm children, even though these perpetrators are high up church officials.

13. continued They would be in danger if they tried to "suppress" their child's demands. Encouraging a "wait and see" approach could be criminal.

mcb "Suppressed" is exactly what the law is intending to protect children from, irrespective of who tries to do it.

The law will not prevent a "wait and see" response, it protects the child, so that the child may make their own free and safe choice about their own treatment. The child may decide to "wait and see", or they may request more active treatment, if that is appropriate. Their choice can only be acted upon, if they make

an informed choice and they are protected by The State, to be able to do this. Family First are choosing to seriously misrepresent the proposed legislation, in a manner to protect parents and churches "assumed right" to damage children.

15. A parent who promotes biological sex could be criminalised, but an activist who indoctrinates young children with the concept of 'gender fluidity' and 'third gender' will be celebrated.

Affirming biological sex will become illegal; affirming 'gender identity' will remain legal.

mcb There is no accepted legal definition of what "biological sex" means. Thus this paragraph descends into meaningless playing with words, in a way that detracts from the purpose of protecting all children's right to develop in the healthiest way possible. Certainly, these issues are not important for 99% of children. But under the Human Rights Act, everyone is meant to be able to develop without undue interference, into the best that they can develop to.

The words "activist" and "celebrate" only confuse the important issues. Protecting ALL children, not just 99% is the important issue.

Affirming behaviours by parents are important to healthy development.

As a young transgirl, my parents affirmed me as a boy. Although I didn't understand the meanings of "gender identity" or "affirm", or "transgirl", I developed with the feeling that I was too scared to open my mouth and express my feelings, from age about 3. I was scared that if my parents knew my feelings, they might not feed me. If I ever spoke about issues touching onto gender, I received very negative feedback. When I reached 8 years, I was regularly suicidal, but too scared to speak about that with anyone, my parents or anyone else. My parents had no understanding that they were not meeting my developmental needs.

16. This is not loving or compassionate towards children. Numerous reviews show the majority of children who are confused about their gender also suffer from diagnosed mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety. As Australian paediatrician Dr John Whitehall asks:

*"Isn't the current 'transitioning' of a child to an alternate gender just another form of 'conversion therapy', using the old and abhorrent means of psychological pressure, hormones and surgery?"*

mcb It is true that children who are described by gender ignorant doctors or parents as "confused" also have comorbid mental health conditions. However, Professor Whitehead is getting causation direction confused and totally backwards. Modern research shows that children who are appropriately affirmed, grow up with good mental health.

In one of his talks for Family First, Professor Whitehall says that in his entire career, he has never once met a transgender child (that he knew about). He has also said that he has never offered treatment to a transgender child, so could not have ever successfully offered transgender treatment to a transgender child. His own words disqualify him as a relevant and competent witness, regarding transgender healthcare. Operating outside of his professional scope is a serious form of medical malpractice. He sounds like a nice person.

## CRIMINALISING COUNSELLORS, CARERS & TEACHERS

17. Under the proposed ban, it could be illegal for a counsellor, spiritual leader, pastor, youth worker, teacher or other professional to counsel a child or adult with gender dysphoria in a way that affirms biology. They could be liable to up to five years imprisonment.

mcb "affirms biology" does not have a sensible medical or legal meaning. Family First are really meaning their own, deliberately ignorant meaning, which I guess to be the hetero-binary idea that children fall into 2 classification categories, male and female heterosexual. That is almost correct, say 94% correct. But 6% of NZers do not fall into those reductive categories. The Human Rights Act was intended to protect all NZers, not just 94%, even though it presently fails to protect about 4% of NZers, transgender and intersex.

Family First do not understand gender dysphoria. They see it as an aberrant choice and in their ignorant world view, why would anyone choose to be so abused by them or the rest of society?

I see gender dysphoria as a medical condition, that results from a genetic occurrence that causes unusual developmental conditions in the brain, akin to the mental development of the opposite sex. Research into transgender aetiology is hampered by the relative inaccessibility of the brain for research. But it appears that the types of genetic failures that create intersex, also apply to the genetic components that control the development of the brain. Intersex aetiology research is far ahead of transgender brain aetiology research and thus offers us many clues to understand transgender condition. This medical research does not involve unseen doGs or worrying about keeping other people's doGs happy.

If someone said to my face that they will pray for me and I should accept that as a substitute for appropriate medical treatment, to keep their "imagined" doG happy, I might break in their facial skull bones.

I know from starting hormone therapy, stopping it and restarting it, how powerful an effect it is to have helpful hormones flowing in my veins and arteries. (I am in the group where that is a very powerful effect. I only lasted 3 days without hormones and then restarted. Having hormones under control, stopped 50% of my suicidal feelings overnight. That was worth its weight in gold, to me. Other people find the difference trivial.) For someone to ask me to forgo that medical assistance, to keep their imagined religious entertainment happy, is arrogance and stupidity beyond comprehension.

I joined Family First about 10 years ago. I was a supporter for over 5 years. I have pulled back since they have embarked on fighting against transgender people receiving appropriate medical treatment. I EMAILED about 10 research papers covering these points to Mr. Bob McCroskie but he seemed totally uninterested and continued on his path of fighting against appropriate medical treatment for transgender people. It seems that his funders set his philosophy and facts should not get in the way. I am still nominally a supporter of some of their other issues.

Five years imprisonment is far too light, in these circumstances.

To help me get over my suicidal feelings, I have had 6 years of counselling and still going on. This reflects my lack of relevant affirmations during my childhood, to allow me to develop into good mental health. I grew up feeling that I could only get by in society by lying about who I was, to survive. Relevant affirmation is essential to health development of any child. It has taken me 6 sixs to rebuild by self value and confidence. And I am still working on those issues.

It is notable that despite the saying "sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me", recovery from mental abuse takes far longer even than healing from broken bones. As a result, the financial cost to remedy mental abuse is far higher than the costs to support repair of bones or burns. Yet the churches poor scorn onto victims of their abuse and fight in caught against paying compensation for the damage that they have done. Victim blaming is financially advantageous to these church leaders, but only adds to their victim's problems.

Rules of Evidence further protect these perpetrators, due to the difficulties of "proving" mental abuse. This is why effective legislation will only occur when appropriate changes are made to Rules of Evidence. Also the coincidence of judges and church leaders both being privileged members of society helps in them being protected from being forced to accept accountability for the harms that they do.

What does "affirming" mean:

My counsellor is cautious and very careful in how she uses words, where she gives me advice, how she frames it or challenges me. Her words do not instill fear into me, like so many "preachers" and parents. On rare occasion she may challenge me and make a judgement. I had ridden across train lines, after the red flashing barrier had come down, she pointed out to me that my action was unfair to the driver and passengers on the train. Her words cut into me and hurt. With some thinking I did understand that I had not respected the rights of these other people and had possibly endangered them.

She affirms me as a person, not in a way that makes judgement on my gender identity or sexuality. In that way, she has helped me to explore the reality of my gender identity and sexuality. She has allowed me to say and to discuss these issues, without trying to push me in any particular direction. Given the high degree of pressure that I have lived under for 61 years, that is a delicate exercise and essential into making the best of what remains of my life.

Her body language is congruent with what she says and that greatly reduces my fear and allows me to open up discussion that I cannot have with other people. She has allowed me to express problems I have had with social and sexual performance, that I have never felt free enough or safe enough to express in any other environment, including DHB counsellors or with doctors.

She has allowed me to talk through risk taking and self harm situations, where no one I have ever met before would let me get anywhere near to those spaces.

She is careful in how she puts together challenges or questions, to have straightforward and clear meanings. So she never has to hide behind ambiguity. She is confident enough of her skills, to allow me to record our sessions. That allows me to listen back afterwards, which I sometimes do. This is valuable to me, more than most people would appreciate, as I am working my way out of childhood dissociation.

In any case, she does not enforce a power dynamic in our relationship, so I can be free to ask her what she means to clarify my misunderstandings. This is delicate for her to do, as I know that the majority of counsellors could not do what she does for me, so that creates a degree of power dynamic. But she defuses that power dynamic for me.

I am very sure that my counsellor understands informed consent in a real life way, not just ticking boxes on a list way.

With doctors, that difficulty to obtain access to helpful doctors reinforces a power dynamic and they do nothing to defuse that power dynamic. I have had arguments with doctors over my own childhood!!

By comparison, many of the religious entertainment "preachers" use excessive levels of fear, to manipulate their congregations. Many of these men use members of their congregation to meet their sexual desires, in ways that damage these members of their congregation. There is a substantial need to protect vulnerable church members from these avaricious, selfish men, in particular to protect children.

By comparison many non-altruistic church leaders and church counsellors use ambiguity to allow themselves to present ideas and later be able to deny that they have presented these ideas. They use contradictory words and body language to achieve the same. Their communications are dangerous, at many levels. For this reason, it is essential that recordings be made and held by government, so that if there was a challenge about the quality of informed consent or the quality of "counselling", both parties would know that reliable evidence would be available to the court. This would avoid the present evidential issues, which allow these perpetrators to escape scot free in most cases.

Given the high degree of pressure that I have lived under for 61 years, allowing me to speak without manipulative judgement is a delicate exercise and essential into making the best of what remains of my life. I just do not see that level of safe space protection in any of the religious counsellors words, or in what Family First say. They do not have a track record of successfully and safely counselling LGBTIQ people.

For these reasons, church based unqualified counsellors can be very dangerous to LGBTIQ people. Words can kill and too often do.

Family First's words and those from many non-altruistic churches show that they do not understand the real life consequences of their actions with respect to LGBTIQ people and are not interested to learn. That shows that they are unable to honour informed consent. Similarly, many doctors have had extreme difficulty with honouring informed consent. That is a severe contrast to what I said about my counsellor: "I am very sure that my counsellor understands informed consent in a real life way, not just ticking boxes on a list way."

To have a safer society, we need to provide effective protection for all our most vulnerable members, not just white religiously deluded males, who were the first to obtain human rights protection.

In this respect, Family First and non-altruistic churches are substantially giving medical advice that transgender people should not seek help from doctors, but persist with prayer to the churches' unseen doGs. This in effect is Family First and these churches offering medical advice. This is criminal and dangerous behaviour and well worthy of prosecution and long term jailment without parole.

Family First's policies discourage doctors from treating transgender people, discourage transgender people from seeking medical help and Government from financing transgender healthcare. Then the social consequences of Family First's publicity, along with other non-altruistic churches that abuse children, is to increase the rate of completed suicides among transgender people. Although the wider group of transgender people number about 40 to 80 thousand in NZ, the completed suicides resulting from prevented treatment amount to a "Pike River" number of deaths every 3 to 10 years. The Health Department are not taking sensible action to reduce suicide in NZ, as these deaths occur outside of hospitals. The DHBs step back and laugh, as it doesn't cost them anything. Although the linkages from church prejudicial actions to completed suicide involves several now well understood linkages, this is not seen as sufficient causation under existing Rules of Evidence to protect vulnerable people or even for awarding damages after the event. Damages is a poor remedial force, when prior prevention is the far superior alternative.

We are dealing with transgender people who have a high level of completed suicides when denied proper medical treatment and a much lower rate of completed suicide when given proper medical treatment, within a facility that also offers social respect. NZ does this poorly, at best and commonly disastrously. The absence of human rights protections for transgender people, leaves us unable to challenge the neglect and defunding of transgender healthcare in NZ.

In reality, these medical profession leaders, church leaders and Family First leaders are mass murderers on a fairly large scale.

18. If a young person, for example, wanted to align their sexuality with the teachings and values of their particular faith – be it Muslim or Christian, Jewish or Sikh, etc – and sought help to do so from a minister or faith leader, the proposed law change would make it virtually impossible to access the support they wanted. Furthermore, if they were able to find someone prepared to provide counselling of that kind, they could well cause that person to become implicated in a criminal offence. Even an ethical discussion of this risk with a counsellor, faith leader or youth worker could be interpreted by the patient, and the law, as 'trying to stop you ("suppressing" as termed in the proposed law) being trans or gay'.

mcb This is exactly what the law should be doing.

Family First seem to have NO sensible understanding of the issues of healthy child development or of counselling. Reading their submission scares me. They have a lot of funding, but in some areas put out dangerous communications. They will not listen and doom themselves in the long run. Their words show why such legislation is needed.

But the proposed legislation will fail to protect, as many such unprofessional counsellors use ambiguity and body language/words incongruity to keep themselves just outside of prosecution, under the proposed

legislation.

What is needed is legislation that actually protects vulnerable people and can pick up communications including body language, that endanger vulnerable people, in the presence of privileged, manipulative powerful people.

Family First appear to have no understanding of the everyday challenges of communicating ethically, constructively and safely, within a counselling relationship. They are right, that such legislation would criminalise their idea of such a conversation. Their idea is that the patient should be manipulated into accepting their dangerous and prejudiced values, over the patient's own judgement. Their attempts to override informed consent and the patient's identity and judgement are exactly what the legislation should make illegal, but with much longer prison sentences mandated.

I am happy to say that Mr. Bob McCroskie has been courteous to me, since I identified myself as transgender and I do appreciate that.

But when I tried to offer information about why some doctors offer transgender healthcare and what advantages that offers to patients, he just was unwilling to even look at it. By his not listening approach, I believe that he loses any defense of not knowing. He has chosen ignorance and should be held fully responsible for all harm caused by his actions. I do understand the difficulty to understand these issues. I had the same difficulty only 6 years ago, but I had a stake in finding the best outcome, to save my own arse, so to speak.

19. One-on-one counselling to help a teen struggling with body image due to anorexia would be permitted, but the very same counselling would be prohibited if the goal is to help a teen struggling with body image due to gender dysphoria.

mcb This paragraph illustrates Family First's total lack of understanding of what "gender dysphoria" is. This is not a valid comparison in any sense. Anorexia is believed to be a developed mental health condition, usually developed in response to an abusive power relationship between parents and child.

Gender dysphoria is not well understood, but such evidence as there is, indicates a biological aetiology, due to a genetic malfunction in severe cases. Certainly many minor presentations of gender dysphoria may be more related to mental health issues.

If a person has a positive response to HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), then that becomes apparent in a few days. It also makes future treatment options fairly clear. To take HRT for up to a month or two, is a safe and low risk test. Doctors deprecate diagnosis by prescription, but in a few cases, it does work awfully well. eg Parkinson's Disease and Sinemet and HRT for some transgender people..

That overlap of physical or mental health causes, does make it imperative to offer skilled and appropriate counselling to transgender patients, though no NZ DHBs are willing to provide such a degree of counselling. That does increase the risks to patients, of receiving the wrong treatment. I arranged such counselling myself and my family helped pay for it, with help also from WINZ.

20. Prayer, as part of counselling or within the setting of a religious meeting, could fall inside the concept of 'conversion therapy'. According to the Ministry of Justice:

*"Conversion practices that take the form of prayer and counselling that are directed towards an individual would be captured."* (our emphasis added)

mcb Family First do not understand gender dysphoria. They see it as an aberrant choice and in their ignorant world view, why would anyone choose to be so abused by them or the rest of society?

I see gender dysphoria as a medical condition, that results from a genetic occurrence that causes unusual developmental conditions in the brain, akin to the mental development of the opposite sex. If someone said to my face that they will pray for me and I should accept that as a substitute for appropriate medical treatment, to keep their "imagined" doG happy, I might break in their facial skull bones.

I know from starting hormone therapy, stopping it and restarting it, how powerful an effect it is to have helpful hormones flowing in my veins and arteries. (I am in the group where that is a very powerful effect. I only lasted 3 days without hormones and then restarted. Having hormones under control, stopped 50% of my suicidal feelings overnight. That was worth its weight in gold, to me. Other people find the difference trivial.)



For someone to ask me to forgo that medical assistance, to keep **their** imagined religious entertainment happy, is arrogance and stupidity beyond my comprehension.

21. Thus, if a church minister, imam or youth leader were to pray for a teenager to be freed from *unwanted* sexual thoughts, this could be interpreted as constituting a criminal offence. It may therefore become dangerous for a child or adult to express confusion over their sexuality or gender. No-one would be able to legally protect them from the gender- transitioning protocols that are backed by the State.

mcb Medically competent research has never been able to back up that even if a person wanted to change their gender identity or sexual orientation, that they could.

quote references

Family First quote small numbers of people who say that they have been helped by "prayer" to unseen doGs. These reports are not competently peer reviewed and the numbers are so small that they have very little evidential value. These were obtained in environments of extreme pressure ie within very judgemental spaces, where the victims were forced to choose between their family and church or their own personal integrity. The preachers were and are taking advantage of the conflict of interest between their own financial welfare and the congregation member's welfare. They do not have long term follow up studies to back their claims.

## CRIMINALISING FAITH-BASED SCHOOLS & PLACES OF WORSHIP

22. Islamic and Christian schools could be breaking the law for teaching their students and encouraging their students to believe that Allah/God made us male and female. Church leaders, youth workers and imams could become criminals for reading and explaining the Quran or the Bible – that is, for doing their job – if the student believes their identity is being 'changed or suppressed'.

mcb If Family First were to put themselves into the situation of a young child, being taught Family First's refusal to acknowledge the child's sex and gender realities, then they could see the harm that they likely would be doing to that child's own sense of identity and self-value.

The practical reality, that Family First and non-altruistic churches refuse to see, is that their judgemental words are communicating to the child that they don't exist, they should not exist and they will not be allowed to exist within the community around the child. Those presented "values" will not help the child to develop a healthy self-value and confidence as a person.

How can fully-grown men and women be so cruel?

How can they choose to remain so insensitive to their children's (and even adult's within their community's) needs?

People who insist on remaining so insensitive and ignorant are not safe parents or carers for children. They should not have any significant involvement with young children or vulnerable adults.

23. If someone says to a spiritual leader, "*I'm struggling with my sexuality and gender identity, please pray for me,*" the leader may be being asked to commit a crime.

mcb If the church leader chooses to pray for the child in a manner that attempts to invalidate the child's identity or gender, then it is appropriate that the child be protected by effective legislation that prevents harm to the child. Prosecuting after harm has been done, is substantially failing to protect the child. Any legislation must have the ability to deter non-altruistic church leaders from committing mental health crimes or physical health crimes against children or vulnerable adults. At present in NZ, many such church leaders still put non-altruistic church cannon law as higher precedence than the law of the land. Their interpretation is that this allows protection of church leaders from prosecution for mental or physical harm to children and

vulnerable adults. I believe that Cardinal Pell made statements along those lines, in his trials for defending paedophile priests. These forces against child protection need to be overcome. Church leaders need to be forced to put the healthy developmental needs of their congregation, especially children, ahead of their own financial and sexual needs.

24. All New Zealanders have a right to freedom of religion. This teaching and explaining is a legitimate activity for places of worship, faith-based schools and for other religious groups.

mcb Freedom to pursue your own religion should not go so far as to impose problems onto other people, who have not chosen to follow your religion.

Family First want to impose onto transgender people, to suffer no governmental funding for transgender healthcare, no funding for counselling to overcome damage done by social stigma driven by these non-altruistic churches and no access to even pay privately for transgender healthcare. They want to deprive transgender people of the help that appropriate medical can deliver. They want to pressure doctors not be willing to help transgender people, using social stigma. To date, they have been highly successful. They claim Freedom of Expression should apply to their prejudicial statements, to maintain non-protection of transgender people under Human Rights Act. To this date, they have been successful.

By comparison, I have used about \$20,000 of counselling, to rebuild my life. I am still working my way through counselling today. I have lived a risky life. I could have been killed along the way, but with no compensation from the people who callously drove my suffering. I have been injured along the way... I just do not see these privileged church leaders as serving society in the way that they claim. Their understanding of the issues of life, does not stand up as being wise or valuable to our futures. These people are only self-praising selfish charlatans.

As I child, I did not have Freedom of Expression, for the words I spoke or how I behaved. Public social pressures, led my parents to apply pressure onto me, in ways that left me living in stealth since before I can remember. I was scared to speak my mind, or assert my identity to my own parents, since before I can remember.

How easy is it for an adult to scare a small child?

These prejudiced social drivers caused me developmental harm, through the ignorant actions and non-actions of my parents. They prevented my parents learning how to meet my needs.

As a child, if I had been allowed Freedom of Expression, so say what I thought, to associate with other children according to my own choices, to dress according to my own values - how much harm would I have caused to those privileged old white men? The problems I would have caused to them are absolutely trivial, maybe the loss of a small amount of income, a little less ability to use fear to manipulate their congregation. I have had to wait until I am 64 years old, to obtain the freedom to speak publicly about these issues. Sometimes I wonder what my life might have been like, if I had been able to speak freely, without fear? I will never know.

I ask Parliament to fairly balance the interests of vulnerable people against the proper interests of privileged people.

## CRIMINALISING 'CONSENT'

31. Incredibly, the bill says that "*consent*" is irrelevant. Apparently, the mantra "*my body my choice*" doesn't apply here. The right of self-determination is a founding principle of the mental health profession, and for children, the wider whanau/ family is part of this important value and support base.

mcb In this paragraph Family First are completely misunderstanding and misrepresenting the concept of informed consent by the patient.



This concept has challenged many medical practitioners, since it was introduced to law nearly 30 years ago. However, it is important that people working in areas where serious hazard can be created, work to minimise danger. This starts from having sufficient knowledge and wisdom about when to proceed, being able to understand the risks and communicate them honestly to the patient, respecting the person at risk's right to make their best decision and then faithfully implementing the person at risk's decision.

Family First emphasise the roles and rights of non-altruistic church leaders and parents, over the patient's right to self-autonomy. By not acknowledging the patient's right to autonomy, they show themselves as being unsuitable people to be involved in discussing conversion therapy, let alone being involved in conversion therapy themselves.

## SCARING THERAPISTS AWAY FROM TROUBLED ADOLESCENTS

45. An Australian family law and child protection expert says that the bill will scare away therapists. Patrick Parkinson AM is an expert on family law and child protection with 35 years' experience in these fields, and has chaired Australia's Family Law Council, led a major review of its child support system, and been President of the International Society of Family Law. He is now Professor of Law at the University of Queensland.
46. He says that "[T]his is no time for the NZ Parliament to pass legislation that will be understood as seeking to scare therapists away from providing therapy to very troubled adolescents who identify as 'trans' or 'gender diverse'."

mcb Professor Patrick Parkinson is qualified as a lawyer. He is not formally qualified in areas of child protection, especially related to neglect, abuse and mental health, let alone transgender healthcare.

Counsellors who lack knowledge about gender and trauma, are not suitable for providing counselling to "adolescents who identify as 'trans' or 'gender diverse'." If they feel chilled out from serving these clients, this is an essential and very desirable aspect of this legislation.

There are counsellors who can readily work safely in this space and who are not deterred by this legislation. This is an essential and very desirable aspect of this legislation.

47. Other key statements in his legal analysis include:

*This Bill is based upon two assumptions that need to be challenged. The first is that there is now a need to ban practices that seek to change or suppress sexual orientation, decades after, it seems, such practices ceased.*

*mcb This claim is far outside Professor Parkinson's experience or legal expertise to make. I assert that Professor Parkinson is wrong on this point. Other submissions address this point, better than I can.*

*The second is that therapies endeavouring to address issues of gender identity are as harmful as those that years ago sought to change sexual orientation.*

*mcb This claim is far outside Professor Parkinson's experience or legal expertise to make. I assert that Professor Parkinson is wrong on this point. Other submissions address this point, better than I can.*

*There is little evidence to support the claim that gender identity is innate and immutable, making any efforts to 'change' or 'suppress' that gender identity both futile and damaging. Even progressive therapists argue that gender is fluid and that gender identity can change in an individual over time. There are now a lot of 'detransitioners' all over the western world, many of whom deeply regret their decision to take cross-sex hormones and to seek irreversible surgeries. The detransitioners alone are sufficient evidence that gender identity is not innate and immutable.*

*There is no evidence to support the claim that therapists who seek to assist children and young people to become more comfortable with their natal sex cause harm by so doing. Rather, the evidence is that with expert, cautious therapeutic support, some 75-85% of children with gender identity issues can be assisted to become comfortable with their natal sex. The majority of them grow up to be gay or lesbian as adults.*

*mcb These claim are far outside Professor Parkinson's experience or legal expertise to make. I assert that Professor Parkinson is very wrong on these points. Other submissions address this point, better than I can.*

## **‘CONVERSION THERAPY’ IN SCHOOLS?**

62. If we are truly concerned about coercion and pressure regarding issues of gender, then many New Zealanders are also concerned about what is happening in schools. Students as young as kindergarten are being taught that changing sex is as easy as changing clothes, teen girls are discovering that biological boys have free access to their changing rooms, and parents are kept in the dark when their child has decided to identify as transgender during the school day.

*mcb I acknowledge that many people have these concerns. Family First puts out lots of material to sustain these fears. But practical experience, in schools who provide appropriate care for transgender children shows that these concerns are unfounded. Family First are abusing fear and creating quite unnecessary fear, for no value. Family First guard their ignorance and are not a constructive force in our society.*

*Even when provided with competent medical research, they refuse to even read it. They prefer to be guided by their own lack of transgender healthcare experience and their own religious delusions prayer.*

## **PARENTS & EXPERTS REJECT PUBERTY BLOCKERS**

88. As mentioned previous (*paras 8-16*), under this bill, parents (and carers / counsellors) could be criminalised and liable to up to five years imprisonment simply for affirming that their sons are boys

and their daughters are girls, and attempting to rightly protect their child from the physical, emotional and psychological harm caused by gender dysphoria.

mcb Family First is not acknowledging that a small fraction of all children are transgender and that these children require care that meets their individual needs, if they are to thrive. By focussing on the majority group and totally ignoring a minority group, they make a statement that sounds obviously true. For the negatively impacted ignored minority, the statement is dangerously untrue. This is exactly what the legislation is intended to protect children from. As mentioned earlier, Family First refuse to understand the realities of gender dysphoria. As a result, their contributions only add danger to transgender people, such as myself.

91. Medical professionals and groups are sounding growing international concern around the use of puberty blockers to treat young people with gender dysphoria because of the low certainty of benefits, but the significant potential for medical harm.

92. Sweden's leading gender clinic – Stockholm's Astrid Lindgren children's hospital – has become the world's first to end routine treatment of minors under the age of 18 with puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones, and may only be provided in a research setting approved by Sweden's ethics review board. The Society for Evidence Based Gender Medicine called it a watershed moment, with one of world's most renowned hospitals calling the "Dutch Protocol" experimental and discontinuing its routine use outside of research settings.

mcb Karolinska Hospital are a very prestigious Swedish hospital with a large amount of experience, over a long period of time, in successfully providing high quality transgender healthcare. I can only guess that their doctors are afraid of the threat of being sued??? I understand that this is a temporary change in policy.

The treatment group who initiated this protocol in Amsterdam continue with this treatment, as do a large number of hospitals in USA.

As pre-puberty transgender patients over the whole world is a relatively recent treatment option, the number of patients who have received this off-label treatment is today well under ten thousand. I would guess only two thousand. It is very expensive, due to the use of under patent drugs. When these drugs come out of patent protection, the cost will become far more accessible to both parents and hospital systems.

These drugs have about 30 years of use for precocious puberty and a few other condition. There is a substantial number of patients and the extent of side effect problems is quite small and with several available drugs, can be managed by use of an alternate drug. This experience is highly transferrable to use for transgender patients. So to present transgender use of GnRH as highly experimental, is seriously misleading. In any case, there is no other way of holding off puberty, in a way that preserves both treatment options for the child. There is no other safe treatment, which protects the mental health of these children. The criticisms of this treatment seem to assume that there is a safe do-nothing option. There is such an option in a sense, but given the clear and obvious dangers and challenges to these children, few experienced clinicians would follow that path.

I have attached 26 references that document these issues, through the last 25 years. I have selected these papers from about one thousand, on the basis of the quality of experience of the authors.

86. Earlier this year, the British High Court banned the use of puberty blockers, which begin the gender transition process, for children under 16 as it deemed they were too young to consent. Britain's

NHS recently withdrew a claim that the effects of puberty blockers are “fully reversible” – a claim recently made on TVNZ’s *Sunday* programme, but challenged by experts spoken to by Newshub.

mcb It is true that this case went through English courts. The NHS doctors failed to justify their treatment protocols in court. They were court unprepared and it also appears that their presentation to the court was seriously underfunded.

## Appendix Example of Incorrect Statements in a Family First Conversion Therapy EMAIL



NZ Government Credibility Agency has received complaints about the communications issued by Family First containing Dangerous and Inexcusably Misleading and information. The Agency has conducted discussions with Family First about these complaints and asked for justifications of claims made. Complaints have continued to come in about further releases by Family First, without any improvements in the integrity of releases. In response to these complaints, it has ordered that this credibility message be embedded within Family First's communication Releases:

The following message contains seriously misleading comments about what other parties have said.  
Health Department advisors to Minister of Health.

Human Rights Commission.

Association of Professional Counsellors of NZ

The following message in essence gives medical advice in a manner that breaches Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, Section 9 Subsection 4:

- (4) No person may perform, or state or imply that he or she is willing to perform, an activity that, by an Order in Council made under this section, is declared to be a restricted activity unless the person is a health practitioner who is permitted by his or her scope of practice to perform that activity.
- (6) Every person commits an offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding \$30,000 who contravenes subsection (4).

The following message in essence gives medical advice in a manner that if the parents of a trans child were to act on this advice, increases the suicide rate of transchildren by about x10.

### Govt To Criminalise Parents For Affirming Biology

*Hi Murray*

*The Government has just introduced the proposed [ban on "conversion therapy"](#).*

**And it's worse than we expected!** *Here's our response....*

---

### **GOVT TO JAIL PARENTS FOR AFFIRMING DAUGHTER AS GIRL, SON AS BOY**

*Media Release 30 July 2021*

*Absolutely nowhere has the Government said what Family First suggests in the headline above.*

*Introducing the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill, Minister of Justice, Kris Faafoi, said the measures proposed were aimed at ending conversion practices which don't work, are widely discredited, and cause harm to rainbow communities and the wider community.*

*"Those who have experienced conversion practices talk about ongoing mental health distress, depression, shame and stigma, and even suicidal thoughts," Kris Faafoi said.*

*"Conversion practices have no place in modern New Zealand. They are based on the false belief that any person's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression is broken and in need of fixing.*

*"Health professionals, religious leaders and human rights advocates here and overseas have spoken out against these practices as harmful and having the potential to perpetuate prejudice, discrimination and abuse towards members of rainbow communities," Kris Faafoi said.*

*The Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill creates two new criminal offences for either the most serious cases of harm or where there is heightened risk of harm. The Bill also creates a pathway for civil redress.*

*Under the Bill, it will be an offence to perform conversion practices on a child or young person aged under 18, or on someone with impaired decision-making capacity. Such offences would be subject to up to 3 years imprisonment.*

*It would also be an offence to perform conversion practices on anyone – irrespective of age – where the practices have caused serious harm, and would carry up to 5 years imprisonment.*

*Civil redress will also be an option where complaints about conversion practices could be made to the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Review Tribunal.*

*To be considered a conversion practice under the Bill, a practice must meet ALL of the following elements, which state that a practice is:*

*directed towards someone because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, AND performed with the intention of changing or suppressing their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.*

*"The Bill's definition of conversion practice has been carefully designed to ensure health practitioners providing health services will not be captured; nor will people providing legitimate counselling, support and advice.*

*"General expressions of religious beliefs or principles about sexuality and gender will also not be captured.*

*<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/conversion-practices-prohibition-legislation-introduced-parliament>*

*Family First NZ says that the proposed 'conversion therapy' ban will be yet another attack on parents' rights, is*



fundamentally flawed and unfair, and has been opposed by the Ministry of Health, a government select committee, and by the general public.

*NZ legislation nowhere gives parents or counsellors any right to harm a child, by forcing them to be subject to "conversion therapy".*

*A ban would criminalise parents who wish to protect their child from the physical, emotional, and psychological harm caused by gender dysphoria. Shockingly, parents would be criminalised and potentially liable up to five years in jail simply for affirming that their sons are boys and their daughters are girls. These bans will lock children into transgenderism.*

*Present medical research shows that gender dysphoria is made more intense by "conversion therapy". There is research through the last century and it has always failed and often done large harm to the person's mental health.*

*On the contrary to what Family First presents, gender dysphoria is most constructively managed by support, affirmation in the identified gender and in some cases surgery to reduce body mind incongruence. Parents or counsellors would only be convicted for trying to affirm a person into the gender they do not and cannot identify into.*

***The government want to criminalise the discussion and practice of alternatives to hormones, surgery and confusion.***

*This statement is completely untrue. The Government is only setting penalties for harmful counselling practice. Discussion (or confusion) about transgender healthcare is not criminalised in any way, but conversion therapy practices are criminalised.*

*Merely encouraging a gender confused child to wait for the orientating effects of puberty to be worked through may be considered a form of child abuse, or 'domestic or psychological abuse' as has been suggested by the Australian Labor party, and is happening in [Canada](#) and the [U.S.](#)*

*Family First is drawing on discredited research, when it makes this claim.*

*A parent who promotes biological sex will be criminalised, but an activist who indoctrinates young children with the concept of 'gender fluidity' and 'third gender' will be celebrated. This is not loving or compassionate towards children. Numerous reviews show the majority of children who are confused about their gender also suffer from diagnosed mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety.*

*Family First is drawing on discredited research, when it makes this claim.*

*It will also be dangerous for a therapist to counsel someone with gender dysphoria in a way that affirms their biology. Islamic and Christian schools could be breaking the law for teaching their students that Allah/God made us male and female. Church leaders, youth workers and imams could become criminals for reading and explaining the Quran or the Bible – that is, for doing their job.*

*In a case where a person being counselled identifies with a gender incongruous with their natal or biological sex, yes such counselling will be criminalised, to protect the patient's mental health from damage.*



*Professional (safe) counselling assists the patient to explore the issues of their own gender - it does not seek to pressure them in any direction*

*If a counsellors interprets . Quran or the Bible or any other "religious" document as instructing a person to unquestioningly accept their biological sex as rigidly defining their gender, then they are a potentially dangerous "counsellor" and for the safety of people they attempt to "counsel", it is important that their patients be protected from the counsellor's ignorance and dangerous attitudes.*

*If a person wanted to align their sexuality with the teachings and values of their particular faith – be it Muslim or Christian, Jewish or Sikh – and sought help to do so from a minister, imam or other faith leader, a ban would make it virtually impossible to access the support they wanted. Furthermore, if they were able to find someone prepared to provide counselling of that kind, they could well cause that person to become implicated in a criminal offence. **According to the government bill, consent is not relevant.***

***The right of self-determination is a founding principle of the mental health profession,** and for children, the wider whanau / family is part of this important value and support base.*

### **ONE 'INFORMAL' COMPLAINT IN 10 YEARS:**

*The Human Rights Commission in response to an Official Information Act request from Family First NZ has admitted that there has only been one informal complaint and no formal complaints in the past 10 year in relation to 'conversion therapy'. A 'formal complaint' is where the other party is notified of a complaint against them. The Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner, in response to a similar inquiry, was also unable to provide any specific numbers. An informal search of 1400 decisions dating back to 1997 suggests that there have been no complaints around 'conversion therapy'. Some of the politicians who have previously supported the proposed ban have [admitted](#) they're also not aware of any cases of involuntary 'conversion therapy' in their communities.*

### **DISSENTING VOICES:**

*Official advice to the Minister and Associate Minister of Health regarding 'conversion therapy' has revealed that a ban is not recommended. [Official Information Act requests](#) show that in 2018, Associate Minister of Health and Green MP Julie Anne Genter was advised by the Ministry of Health:*

*"Due to the current protections that are in place, and the need to balance the rights of people with preventing harm, it is not recommended that a legislative ban of conversion therapy would be the most effective way to reduce the harm it causes..."*

*The ministerial advice also notes that people have the freedom to willingly engage in the practice, that protections already exist in the health sector, and that a ban "could be inconsistent" with the NZ Bill of Rights Act 1990 "which provides for rights of assembly, free speech and rights to freedom of religion".*

*In 2019, the Justice Select Committee, consisting of MPs from Labour and National, considered two petitions wanting to ban 'conversion therapy'. In their [report](#), they rightly declined to support such a ban, stating:*

*"The Bill of Rights Act affirms, protects, and promotes human rights and fundamental freedoms in New Zealand. It allows all New Zealanders to live free from discrimination, including in relation to their sexual orientation. New Zealanders also have the right to freedom of religion. This protects those who offer and seek out conversion therapy because of their religious views."*



## Appendix Mormon Suicides

Statistics on Suicide and LDS Church Involvement in Males Age 15 to 34 2000

BYU Copyright 2000

by Gilbert W. Fellingham, Kyle McBride, H. Dennis Tolley, and Joseph L. Lyon

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/17100012/>

### Conclusions

Religious activity rates of males as measured by lay priesthood office in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was significantly inversely associated with suicide rates in the State of Utah. Inactive LDS males had age-adjusted suicide rates approximately four times those of active LDS males. Non-LDS males had suicide rates approximately six times those of active LDS males. U.S. white males had rates approximately two and onehalf times those of active LDS. In the group where church activity is most closely approximated by lay priesthood office, the U.S. rate is nearly seven times that of active LDS.

### Update

We have recently concluded an analysis of data covering the years 1991 to 1995. Except for the 15 – 19 age group, the suicide rates for active LDS remain significantly lower than inactive LDS in Utah, non-LDS in Utah, and national rates. In the 20 – 24 age group, active LDS rates are virtually identical to national rates, and these rates are significantly lower than those for inactive LDS and non-LDS.

This document precedes the 2015 policy changes by LDS. Thus it does not address the most challenging time period. I was not able to find any LDS documents that covered 2015 onwards.

COMING OUT MORMON:  
AN EXAMINATION OF RELIGIOUS ORIENTATION, SPIRITUAL TRAUMA, AND PTSD  
AMONG MORMON AND EX-MORMON LGBTQQA ADULTS  
by BRIAN WILLIAM SIMMONS  
(Under the Direction of Shari E. Miller)

[https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/simmons\\_brian\\_w\\_201712\\_phd.pdf](https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/simmons_brian_w_201712_phd.pdf)

### ABSTRACT

Participation in organized religion has been correlated with various negative mental health outcomes for LGBTQQA persons, including shame, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse. However, previous research has not fully examined the impact of specific religious events on these outcomes. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationships between Allport & Ross' (1967) religious orientations, orthodoxy, spiritual trauma, and PTSD in LGBTQQA Mormons and ex-Mormons. Mormonism was selected as the study's focus population given its centralized governing structure as well as its strong doctrinal and policy restrictions against homosexuality and transgenderism.....

## The LGBTQ Mormon Crisis: Responding to the Empirical Research on Suicide

Author(s): Michael Barker, Daniel Parkinson and Benjamin Knoll Source: Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought , Summer 2016, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 2016), pp. 1-24 Published by: University of Illinois Press

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.5406/dialjmormthou.49.2.0001.pdf>

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MICHAEL BARKER {[oregonortho@hotmail.com](mailto:oregonortho@hotmail.com)} works in orthopedic surgery as a Physician Assistant and lives with his wife and two daughters in beautiful Southern Oregon. He is a competitive mountain biker and is a lover of bow ties and non-white dress shirts. He and his two brothers are the proprietors of the Rational Faiths blog.

DANIEL PARKINSON, MD {[danielparkinson@yahoo.com](mailto:danielparkinson@yahoo.com)} is a psychiatrist in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has been involved with the intersection of LDS and LGBT issues for several years. His primary projects have been the blog No More Strangers, the podcast Gay Mormon Stories, and the I'll Walk With You video project, which focuses on LDS parents of LGBTQ people ([ldswalkwithyou.org](http://ldswalkwithyou.org)).

BENJAMIN KNOLL {[benjamin.knoll@centre.edu](mailto:benjamin.knoll@centre.edu)} is the John Marshall Harlan Associate Professor of Politics at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. He is the author of several scholarly articles on the intersection of race, religion, and American politics and is currently a permablogger at RationalFaiths.

### What Can Be Done?

What the existing research has clearly shown is that the single largest factor contributing to the mental and emotional health of young LGBTQ people is family acceptance versus rejection. The Family Acceptance Project has specifically identified “rejecting behaviors” that are associated with mental and emotional harm to LGBTQ individuals. We would do well to ask ourselves if our families, wards, or communities might be doing any of the following:

1. Not allowing or strongly discouraging a youth from identifying themselves as LGBTQ.
2. Not allowing their child to socialize with other LGBTQ youth.
3. Not allowing their child to participate in supportive organizations that will help the youth cope, such as a GSA.
4. Not addressing bullying that their children face around being perceived as LGBTQ.
5. Not protecting their LGBTQ child against derisive comments by uninformed relatives or family friends.
6. Engaging in derisive comments about LGBTQ people or demonizing of LGBTQ people.
7. Not providing a family climate where a child feels safe to come out to their parents.
8. Endorsing statements or comments that make a child fear they will be kicked out of their home or will lose their families if they come out.

The most effective preventions are cheap and easy. We need to educate and support parents and we need to empower our schools to address the needs of our youth. Parents are eager and willing to do what is best for their children. They need to have access to this helpful information through bishops and auxiliary leaders, through mental health providers, and through school counselors. Training needs to happen. Barriers to action need to be removed.

## What Should the State Do?

We believe that the state should take more leadership on the issue of LGBTQ and homeless youth. It should participate in efforts to track suicides and suicide attempts and study contributing factors. The state of Utah specifically should lift the “gag rule” so that LGBTQ issues can be discussed in schools and should require schools to adopt anti-bullying programs that have been proven successful in other school districts. It should remove any barriers and promote the creation of school-based GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) clubs, which have a proven benefit for all students (not just the LGBTQ students). It should seriously address youth homelessness and invest in adequate shelters and remove legal barriers that keep agencies and outreach workers from helping these teens.

## What Should the Church Do?

We are going to leave this up to the reader. We have identified the problem. The Church’s role in both the way that LGBTQ issues are handled in Mormon practice, policies, doctrines, and culture, as well as in the legislative process in Mormon-dominant communities, is evident. The Church’s influence in the messages that go to wards and communities about LGBTQ people is, likewise, evident. We hope that Church leaders and members alike will consider the consequences of their positions and rhetoric about LGBTQ issues and find ways to satisfy theological concerns without contributing to the despair and tragedies playing out in the lives of our children.

## Conclusion

Any discussion of this issue should take into account whether we are helping or exacerbating the problem. In our opinion, this recent discussion has brought much-needed attention to the issue. Sometimes the discussions have been counter-productive, however. We should not let our focus on one single event, such as the new exclusionary handbook policy, distract us from the numerous issues that lead to distress among our LGBTQ youth. We need to accept that the data we have so far do not allow us to precisely estimate the number of youth suicides driven by the Church’s positions and rhetoric on LGBTQ issues, but we also need to recognize that the evidence points to a serious problem. It also points us toward solutions that are effective and inexpensive.

Furthermore, we should be careful to follow proven guidelines about how to discuss suicide without contributing to suicide contagion. Suicide contagion or “copycat suicide” occurs when one or more suicides are reported in a way that contributes to another suicide.<sup>48</sup> Suicide contagion is a real problem when suicides become high profile. We can and must discuss suicide among our youth, but we need to do it responsibly. We refer readers to ReportingOnSuicide.org for guidance on how to discuss the issue in our online as well as personal conversations. We also recommend resources such as the Family Acceptance Project (<http://familyproject.sfsu.edu/>), I’ll Walk With You (<http://www.ldswalkwithyou.org/>), and Affirmation (<http://www.affirmation.org/>). Finally, we issue a plea for Church members to be a voice for compassion in their individual wards. Speaking out requires courage, but it also decreases pain and saves lives. You may never know who was saved because of something you said or something you did. But it is important to take a stand, speaking and acting with acceptance, understanding, and love. We have an illness. We have a problem. Let’s implement the cure.

## Youth Suicide Rates and Mormon Religious Context An Additional Empirical Analysis

by [Benjamin Knoll](#) | Mar 9, 2016 | [Featured](#), [Homosexuality](#), [LGBTQ](#) | [29 comments](#)

<https://rationalfaiths.com/mormon-religious-context-and-lgbt-youth-suicides-an-additional-empirical-analysis/>

This paper gives the DETAILED statistical analysis, for the previous paper.

## **Supportive Families, Healthy Children**

Helping Latter-day Saint Families with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Children

BY Caitlin Ryan, PhD, ACSW AND Robert A. Rees, PhD

<https://familyproject.sfsu.edu/sites/default/files/FAP%20LDS%20Booklet%20pst.pdf>

**FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT**

**SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY**

The Family Acceptance Project is developing a new evidence-based family approach for care and support of LGBT youth. We are also developing a series of educational, video and assessment materials for families, caregivers and providers. This booklet offers basic information to help parents and caregivers support their LGBT children; to reduce their children's health risks, including depression, suicide, substance abuse and HIV infection; and to promote their well-being.

For additional information, visit our webpage at <http://familyproject.sfsu.edu> or write to us at [fap@sfsu.edu](mailto:fap@sfsu.edu)

This booklet was written to attempt to show LDS parents how they might reconcile LDS teachings, with caring satisfactorily for an LGBT child. The booklet has been approved by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.



*Two Mormon mothers discuss the unique struggles of raising transgender kids, especially when the LDS Church is not supportive or dismisses gender dysphoria as something that will be healed in the afterlife.*

Following the LDS teachings literally, exposes many LGBTIQ children to a hugely increased risk of completing suicide. Mama Dragons is a group of parents who offer sharing of ideas about how to protect their children, from the teachings of the LDS Church.